

Several farm schools have been established in this State with the idea of preparing boys for farm life and giving them a grounding in rural methods.

Tardun Agricultural College was founded in 1927. It is situated in the dry area, being 307 miles north of Perth on the Midland line. The object of the school, which is conducted by the Christian Brothers, is to recruit orphan boys from the Clontarf Orphanage at about the age of 12 to 15 years and give them a training in agricultural methods sufficient to enable them to conduct farming operations or to accept work as farm labourers. No fees are charged. The boys live on the farm. The idea is to select land and establish the most promising boys on their own farms. As regards the other boys, the Brothers place them in employment when they are ready, their wages ranging from 12s. 6d. to £2 10s. per week and keep. The school has initiated a system of instructing the boys in general educational subjects and putting them up for the Junior examination of the University—a policy to be commended. The Principal of the school (Brother Conlon) states that there is no lack of application for the boys when they have finished their training.

The Fairbridge Farm School, as is well known, was founded by the late Kingsley Fairbridge, who came from England in 1912 for the purpose of establishing a farm school for child immigrants from the Old Country, who are either orphans or the children of poor parents. Fairbridge's principle was that in order to make successful migrants, who would settle down to rural pursuits, it was advisable to bring children away from the home country at an early age and so settle them in a new country at a time when their minds had not yet become impressed with the environment of their native land. For the purpose of his scheme he founded a farm school near Pinjarra. This school, which accommodates both boys and girls, aims at cultural education of a primary and post-primary type and also at vocational instruction in farming methods for the boys and domestic science training for the girls. The record of the school is one of steady progress in the face of formidable obstacles. The majority of the boys at the farm who have completed their training have been placed out in farm work, and the girls for the most part take up domestic work. The farm is well equipped with buildings and since 1921 has been revenue producing. This school already receives a subsidy of 3s. 6d. per week per child under 14 years of age from the State Government and a further subsidy of 3s. 6d. per week per child and 5s. per week per child from the Commonwealth and Imperial Governments respectively. The State contribution is paid on the certificate of the Fairbridge authorities that it is costing them more than 15s. per week for each child in respect of whom the subsidy is paid.

The Ugly Men's farm at Wokalup was started a little over four years ago. It has a capitalisation of about £14,000 and has turned out approximately 250 boys who have found employment at wages ranging from 12s. 6d. to £1 per week. This farm caters for unemployed boys of poor parents. The object is to keep the boys on the farm for about three months and during that time to give them a grounding in dairying, including the care of cows and calves, milk separation, cleanliness and hygienic conditions, feeding and tending pigs, vegetable growing, kitchen work, handling horses, machinery, etc. During the time the boys are at the school, according to the season, they learn a little about shearing, lambing, lamb-marking, woolclassing, the construction of silages, haymaking, fertilising, topdressing, etc.

The Werribee Boys' Home, which is conducted under the auspices of the Methodist Church, is situated near Wooroloo. It was founded in November, 1928, for the purpose of housing and training boys in farm pursuits. The boys' ages range from 10 to 14 years. In the first few years the Home took 15 to 20 boys annually but for the last few years the number has been 30 per year. The aim of the Home is to accommodate boys who, on prospects, appear to have less opportunity than the average boy (*e.g.*, boys from poor homes) and destitute orphan boys. About half the number in the Home are State wards for whom the State pays 7s. per week per child to the age of 14 years. The boys attend the local Government school. Boys from 12 years of age have two afternoons per week off from school studies to learn farm work and they receive further instruction in their spare time. The farm has sheep, poultry, and dairy cattle, and also an orchard. A certain amount of hay is produced. The farm is conducted by a superintendent and an assistant and there is an expert advisory committee.

Since 1930, 26 boys have been trained in the Home and placed on farms. The executive reports that there is always a waiting list of farmers who desire to obtain the services of these boys. If at any time up to the age of 18 years a boy becomes unemployed he may return to the Home and work there until another situation is found for him.

The Home is supported by donations, by the State subsidy (already referred to) of 7s. per week for each State ward, and parents and guardians are charged 7s. per week for each boy placed there by them. The average annual cost per head per boy, based on a yearly average of 30 boys, is £39 7s. but this does not take into account gifts in kind and voluntary services rendered to the Home.

On the whole I find that agricultural instruction is not well catered for in this State. The Muresk College and the Narrogin School of Agriculture can take a limited number of students only, and besides, the standard of instruction imparted at these centres is much beyond what is required in the majority of cases.

In another portion of this report I have stated that I consider that the curriculum of the country schools should be revised so that in the post-primary stages and in the high schools definite attention can be given to agricultural training.

Admittedly farm schools are expensive institutions to keep up and they appear to be more suitable for that type of lad who has been unfortunate enough to have been left an orphan and destitute. The worthy institutions I have mentioned have a difficult task in carrying on, and as they are doing vocational work of a useful nature and endeavouring to make some provision for a type of boy who is less able to help himself than more fortunate boys, **I recommend that an allowance of 10s. per week be paid in respect of each destitute orphan boy maintained and trained by these schools until the boy reaches the age of 15 years, on condition that—**

**The methods of vocational training comply with requirements to be laid down by the Education Department; and the schools show that they are instructing the boys and keeping up a general educational standard satisfactory to the Department.**

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## **(16) CONSIDERATION OF SOME SPECIAL AVOCATIONS IN WHICH IT WAS SUGGESTED THERE WAS AMPLE ROOM FOR ABSORPTION OF FURTHER LABOUR.**

I now propose to consider some special avocations in which it was suggested that there was ample room for the absorption of further labour. They are as follow:—

### **DOMESTIC LABOUR.**

This type of labour with the women is as unpopular as is farm labour with the men. The reason that the women have drifted from this form of employment is principally that there are more attractive forms of employment now open to them which have arisen pursuant to technological progress. The field of domestic work covers a wide range and there is some evidence of exploitation, and just as much evidence on the part of the domestic workers of incapacity to do the work for which they are hired.

The women's point of view was represented by Miss Holman, M.L.A., and Mesdames Rischbieth and Joyner, who advocated the proper training of girls in this work and suggested the organisation of this class of labour by means of an award of the Court of Arbitration. At the present time, as is well known, the Court of Arbitration has no jurisdiction in regard to these workers, and on every occasion when a Bill has been put before Parliament to authorise the Court to deal with this calling Parliament has not passed the Bill. No doubt there is some apprehension that trade unionism will obtrude itself into the home by means of inspectors calling to interview workers, although the last proposal brought before Parliament excluded powers of inspection in this particular case.

There is room for extension in domestic science instruction by the technical branch of the Education Department, and elsewhere in this report I have made a recommendation that increased facilities be given in this regard. In recruiting girls for these classes I consider that some attention should be paid to ascertaining whether the girl who is to receive instruction intends to take up this class of work. I realise of course that not all girls attend these classes for that purpose, but there should at any rate be a large percentage attending the classes with the idea of taking up the calling as a means of livelihood. But it is not much good leaving the matter at that. It is necessary to have an officer attached to the school who can make contact with suitable employers who could take these girls as they are trained. If it turns out that even with these aids the girls fail to take the employment offering, then I think the course might well be abandoned.

Evidence was given that in Denmark the domestic workers had organised and formed a union and that their status was recognised in that country to an extent far above the status of that type of labour in Australia. It is difficult to make a comparison without knowing something of Danish social life, and one cannot say definitely that over a course of years such a state of affairs could be brought about in